

all the plans which had been sent in, and acquiesced in the sentiments of the president in favour of Mr. Fowler's plan, and against the responsibility which had been so ably demonstrated as being the inevitable result of the employment of any other architect. The other noble trustees were apparently convinced by these arguments, and accordingly the bill which had been passed by the Commons was thrown out by the Lords. But during this discussion, several communications took place between the trustees and the committee, and counsel's opinion was taken respecting the terms of the Act and the liability of the trustees.

It having been decided that the power rested with the president and trustees absolutely, according to the strict letter of the law, the question was raised, whether the committee could exonerate the trustees by taking on themselves the responsibility, but this was found to be impracticable, unless each member were made individually liable. The president, therefore, intimated that he should be perfectly satisfied to submit Mr. Mocatta's plan to six respectable builders (not recommended by him), and that if it should be found that the building could be erected for the sum prescribed, no further objection would be raised. It was then proposed, that three members of the committee should be appointed to co-operate with the president and trustees, and that the united body should have absolute power to complete the building.

This proposal was adopted at the anniversary of the institution. The first step taken by this joint committee was to appoint Mr. Fowler as the architect, and to vote a sum of money to Mr. Mocatta as a compensation for his plans, his trouble, and his disappointment.

The sugar-plum thus voted was 200*l*. This proceeding, having been reported to some members of the committee, excited great disapprobation, and was generally considered to be an act of injustice to Mr. Mocatta, and discourtesy to the managers of the institution, who had been displaced from their office by a legal accident, and were thus placed in a very invidious position with reference to a gentleman whom they had deliberately appointed as architect to the hospital, after a severe competition.

At the next meeting of the committee, I moved the following resolution:—

"This committee having been informed that it is the intention of the president and trustees to pay to Mr. Mocatta the sum of two hundred pounds by way of compensation, instead of retaining his services as architect,—

"Resolved, That in the opinion of this committee such payment, if made out of the funds of the hospital, would be a mal-appropriation of the said funds. The committee also consider that the dismissal of Mr. Mocatta, under such circumstances, would be an act of injustice, implying a reflection on his professional character, quite inconsistent with the fact, that the principles of his plan were approved by the committee and medical staff; and that this treatment of a professional man, is at variance with the admitted and recognised custom in all fair competitions."

Being aware that the members of the committee very generally participated in my sentiments on this matter, and having had frequent opportunities of conversation respecting it, I was astonished to find that not one of the gentlemen present rose to second the motion, and found myself in a predicament very much resembling that of Don Quixote, when he made his attack on the windmills; my colleagues, instead of giving any assistance, remained passive, and appeared to be paralyzed,

as was Sancho Panza on the above renowned occasion.

Having observed the interest which you express in your journal in reference to the fairness and equity of competitions in general, I trust this very brief outline of a very remarkable specimen, will not be uninteresting to your readers. If all the particulars were stated, with the official correspondence, and the artful dodges of the legal secretary, the narrative would be still more amusing and instructive.

The most remarkable feature in the transaction is the circumstance, that a gentleman, a member of an honourable and respectable profession, should allow himself to be placed in so unfair a position with reference to a brother architect. I have only to add that I have no personal acquaintance with these two gentlemen, and therefore cannot plead guilty to prejudice in favour of either of them. My only desire has been, and is, to advocate justice, without which a competition is a mockery and a delusion, instead of being, what its name would imply, a trial of skill.—I am, Sir, yours, &c., JACON BELL.

15, Langham-place, April 3, 1848.

EXHIBITION OF THE SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS.

THE character of this exhibition is improved this year, as much by the exertions of the members themselves, as from the reformed system of hanging. The next exhibition is likely to show greater advance, as the present will inspire the non-members with confidence, and be the means of making them paint purposely, instead of sending the refuse of contemporary exhibitions, as hitherto.

Amongst the pictures, there are some of great merit and originality: take, for instance, Mr. Anthony's "Village Green," abounding in the highest qualities. At the first glance, one feels inclined to laugh at the seeming defiance set to nature; *seeming*, only, though, for the truth and feeling expressed are startling; the wonderful diversity of action, without assumption or display—the exquisite silvery tone of the distance, so expansive, yet definitely made out—are admirable. A cooler quality of colour in the foreground shadow would, we think, improve the picture amazingly, and enhance the value of such colour as that of the left hand group. The smaller pictures by this artist all exhibit nature, originally but truly understood. Amongst the best are "The Hay Cart—Stormy Weather" (87); "On the Coast of Galway" (222); "Women at a Holy Well praying for the return of the absent" (355); "Le Menage Paysanne de Normandie," exquisite in breadth and colour, but too like Gerard Dow (333); "A Mountain Stream," &c.

Pallanza, on the Lago Maggiore, North Italy, by Mr. Pynn, is a beautiful specimen of this deservedly popular painter, the middle distance exhibiting his precision of drawing, and knowledge of perspective: the water beautifully lucid, undisturbed, excepting by the positively moving steam-boats.

Smaller specimens, of which there are seven or eight, are all most covetable, more especially a warm bit over the mantel-piece in the large room. "Entrance to the Menai Straits" (59), and (245) "Saint's-day, Venice"—much like Turner.

Some of Mr. Clint's usual coast scenes are exquisitely fresh and true. A fine "Sunset on the Coast of Yorkshire" is one of the best pictures in the collection.

Mr. Allen contributes a number of smaller pictures than usual; amongst the best are (132) "A Water Mill," very nice in colour and execution; (407) "Mill on the Greta," (460) "In the Clwyd Vale," &c.

Mr. Baxter's heads are exquisitely coloured and felt. No man extant could paint better, and very few as well as (480) "The Wreath," or 69, "Italian Girl," or a sweet pair, entitled "Happy Moments" (511), and "Sad Moments" (211).

The dreamy but poetical productions of Mr. Woolmer are agreeable to all, but much too vague to convey anything more than suggestions of the artist's intentions. (213) "A Summer's Evening," is a nice specimen of his taste and poetical feeling, as are (232) "View in the Wood, near the Hague, Holland,"

"The Pilgrim at the Well" (366), and the "Bridge of Sighs" (456).

The two Wilsons have some excellent productions, one, especially, by the younger, an "Unfrequented Path, a Scene in Marden Park, Surrey," the trees of which are capitally touched in.

Holland's clear, forcible painting always tells well wherever employed. In addition to some first-rate hits of his usual subject, "Greenwich Hospital," &c., he has some exquisite delineations of flowers, wonderful transcript of nature, perfect as far as regards colour and arrangement.

We are glad to observe that Mr. Tennant has this year eschewed departure from his right path, and painted English River Scenes (11), (120) "On the Wye, near Monmouth," (229) "A Rocky Glen," (249) "Near Bevelly Heath, Kent," &c.

Mr. Boddington has diverged somewhat from his beaten track, and revels in warm sun-shiny "Shades of Evening" (81), a clever representation of a difficult effect; a little more knocking about would benefit its somewhat formal treatment. Other pictures, in his usual generally appreciated manner, vary in their general merits and demerits.

Mr. Lewis, the new member, is decidedly an acquisition; his picture (470) "An Opportunity that makes the Thief," exhibits considerable power, parts of it being capitally painted.

Mr. Hurlstone harps too much upon the same string, but produces nevertheless some fine results. His large picture, "Mendicanti of the Piazza Navona, Rome," is nice, but forced rather in colour. "Un Præcator" is also an agreeable impersonation of everyday life.

Amongst pictures by non-members, a beautiful production by Windus, "Morton before Claverhouse" (488), calls for commendation, if only from its perfection of mechanical handling. Seldom such power over the material has been attained, and the character about the heads, particularly that of the old man, is extraordinary. "The Coming Footstep" (499), sweetly painted by Mr. Marshall, and the "Morning Toilet" (111), are both charming representations of refined rusticity.

NOTES IN THE PROVINCES.

THE foundation-stone of a new church was laid at Fordeome Green, Penrhurst, on Friday week, by Lord Hardinge, who had previously sent funds home from India for the purpose of building the edifice.—Donations are in course of collection at Folkestone for the erection of a monument to the celebrated Dr. Harvey, discoverer of the circulation of the blood, who belonged to that town. Earl Radnor offered the choice of a site on his estate, and the architect to his lordship offered his professional services gratuitously.

—The town of Romford, according to the *Chelmsford Chronicle* is "under great excitement," in consequence of the refusal by the gas proprietors to accede to the but too "reasonable" demand of the gas consumers to be supplied with their gas at 7*s*. 6*d*. per 1,000 cubic feet, in place of 8*s*. 4*d*. "An opinion prevails that the gas proprietors are standing in their own light," as they unquestionably are. "Much asperity has been expressed on both sides, and most of the shops in the evening have been lighted with oil or candles." As the inhabitants have been "meeting in great numbers," and the majority of gas consumers have given the directors notice that they will use their gas no longer, they have only determined to follow the spirited example of the Woolwich gas consumers in establishing their own association and their own gas-works in the face of the stupid directors, whom they ought to inform, when they do give in, which they undoubtedly will, that it is "too late." The expense of getting up a sufficient gas establishment the Romford people would find by no means so great as they probably imagine.—The Town Council of Bridgnorth have just given leave to a new gas company to lay down pipes in the streets, as the price paid by the town (and, doubtless, by the private gas consumers,) is deemed to be excessive, each lamp costing twice the sum charged at

The nature of this legal accident ought to be explained. According to the deed under which the trustees are appointed, they are merely the guardians of the funds, the expenditure being under the control of the managing committee. In the Act of Parliament under which the Railway Company purchased the present hospital, the purchase-money is vested in the president and trustees, to be expended in building a new hospital, in such manner as the said president and trustees shall think proper. In order to be consistent with the trust-deed, the words should have been "in such manner as the managing committee shall think proper." This inconsistency was not pointed out to the committee by the auditor, until after the committee had occupied several months in performing what had always been considered to be their duty, but which, according to the present reading of the Act, appears to be the office of the trustees, so much for the advantage resulting from the services of a legal secretary.